



# OSDBU NEWS BULLETIN

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## THOMAS LEAVES NASA

Ralph C. Thomas III, NASA's Assistant Administrator for Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization since 1992, announced that he would leave his post on December 1<sup>st</sup> to return to the practice of law in a recent letter to Administrator Mike Griffin. Mr. Thomas, NASA's longest serving Associate or Assistant Administrator, came to NASA at a time when the Agency's Small business Program was under fire from Congress, industry, and the small business community for its then- poor record of awarding contracts and subcontracts particularly minority and women-owned businesses

During his tenure, however, NASA's total dollars to small businesses grew from \$2.5 billion in FY 1992 to a record-breaking \$3.65 billion in FY 2004; with essentially the same annual contracting budget. Total prime and subcontract award dollars to minority small disadvantaged businesses almost tripled from \$615 million to \$1.9 billion, the highest amount in NASA's history while total prime and subcontract award dollars to women-owned businesses nearly quadrupled from \$219 million to \$846 million – also the highest amount in NASA's history.

For his efforts Mr. Thomas has received numerous awards and other forms of recognition on behalf of himself and his program. In 2005 he was named **“Man of the Year”** by *Minority Enterprise Advocate Magazine*. Moreover, his program received more votes than any other major Federal contracting agency in a nationwide online election of diverse business owners conducted by DiversityBusiness.com. In the same year his program won the competitive Frances Perkins Vanguard Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for his agency's outstanding accomplishments in contracting and subcontracting with women owned small businesses. In 2004 **he was named “Minority Business Entrepreneur Advocate of the Year”** by *Asian Enterprise Magazine* and his program won the competitive **Diversity Innovator Award** from the National Women's Business Center.

In 2001, under President George Bush, he was conferred the Presidential Rank of Distinguished Executive, the highest honor in the Federal government for senior executives and an award limited to just one (1) percent of the Senior Executive Service. In 2000, under President Bill Clinton, he received the Presidential Rank of Meritorious Executive, an award limited to just five (5) **percent** of the Senior Executive Service. From 2001-2003, he was elected to two consecutive terms as Chairman of the Federal Small Business Directors **Interagency Council, an organization** consisting of his counterparts in the other Federal agencies. From 2002 - 2005 he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Senior Executives Association., an organization representing the interests of senior executives in the Federal government. Internationally, Mr. Thomas addressed audiences in Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Finland, Switzerland, and Turkey about his program's unique and successful initiatives. He was the lead editor of the publication, “International Best Practices Manual the Maximized Utilization of Small and Medium Enterprises,” a joint project between his office and the World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises. In March of 1999 he traveled to Bombay, India where he received the coveted Special Honor Award at the International Conference on Small and Medium Enterprises, the highest international honor “for initiative, innovation, leadership, and commitment on behalf of small businesses.”

An attorney, Mr. Thomas is a graduate of **Harvard Law School** in Cambridge, Massachusetts and also received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the **University of California at Berkeley**, where he graduated with honors. He is also an Air Force Vietnam Veteran. He is the author of more than 60 published articles

on small business issues and has testified in Congress on such issues more than 30 times. He has served as the elected Chairman of the Federal Bar Association's Government Contracts Section (2002-2003) and is also Chairman of that Section's Committee on Small Business & Socioeconomic Matters. In 2004 he was admitted to the Bar of the **United States Supreme Court**.

Mr. James Balinskas, a deputy assistant administrator for procurement, was named Acting Assistant Administrator until a successor is selected following a nationwide competition.

## **WINNERS OF NASA MINORITY BUSINESS AND ADVOCATES AWARDS SELECTED**

NASA held its Annual Minority Business and Advocates Awards Ceremony during Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week at NASA Headquarters, 300 E Street, S.W. in Washington, D.C. on September 14, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. The winner of NASA's Minority Contractor of the Year was Tessada & Associates, Inc. located in Springfield, Virginia, and headed by Mr. Enrique Tessada, it's President. The firm selected as NASA's Minority Subcontractor of the Year was Bastion Technologies, Inc. of Houston, Texas, headed by Mr. Jorge Hernandez, its President. NASA's Woman Owned Business of the Year was Barrios Technology, Ltd. of Houston, Texas, headed by Ms. Sandra Johnson its President.



*Left to Right: Eric Clark, Maria Thompson, Joe Fuller, Jr., Jasmine Ali, Ralph Thomas, Sandra Johnson, Jorge Hernandez, Enrique Tessada, Robert Medina, Vernon Vann, and Charles Griffin*

The winners of NASA's Exceptional Achievement Medals for their special advocacy on behalf of minority businesses are given in three categories – Technical, Procurement and Small Business. The winner in the Technical category is Mr. Eric B. Clark, Electrical Engineer at NASA's Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio. The individual selected in the Procurement category was Mr. Jeffrey Jackson, Contracting Specialist at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. The winner in the Small Business category was Mr. Robert Medina, Small Business Specialist, at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center.

Winners of the NASA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) Special Recognition Awards for lifetime achievement or a single outstanding act were: Bay Systems of Oakland, California, headed by its President, Ms. Jasmine Ali; Futron Corporation of Bethesda, Maryland, headed by its President, Mr. Joe Fuller, Jr. and T/J Technologies, Inc. of Ann Arbor, Michigan, headed by its President, Ms. Maria A. Thompson.

The NASA Field Centers which received awards for meeting all of their major small business goals which they negotiated were: Langley Research Center in Virginia, headed by General Roy Bridges; Stennis Space Center in Mississippi, headed by Admiral Thomas Q. Donaldson, V.; Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, headed by Mr. James King; and, Dryden Flight Research Center in California, headed by Mr. Kevin L. Petersen.

The awards followed a “State of Small Business at NASA Address” given by NASA Administrator Dr. Michael Griffin

## INAUGURAL SMALL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE IS SMASHING SUCCESS



*Ralph Thomas (left) and Lamont Hames proudly pose behind STS-114 Discovery Mission Astronauts Eileen Collins, Soichi Noguchi, Stephen Robinson, and Charles Camarda*

The NASA OSDBU held the first Small Business Solutions Conference on September 1-2, 2005. By all accounts it was an amazing success. Beginning with the morning plenary session, the attendees knew they were in for a treat. Leading off the festivities were four of the astronauts who were on the successful launch of the *Discovery* shuttle in August 2005. They were Commander Eileen Collins, Stephen Robinson, Charles Camarda and Soichi Noguchi. Commander Collins, a native New Yorker from Elmira, narrated a short Return to Flight video highlighting the test mission to the International Space Station and the subsequent spacewalk repair jobs on the shuttle's surface.

After the presentation, Assistant Administrator Ralph Thomas asked all of those small businesses in the audience who had contracts or subcontracts related to the Return to Flight initiative to stand up. About 15% of the 500 attendees rose. NASA was also welcomed by city and state officials. After that there were 14 workshops held throughout the day, including a 3-hour session on NASA's new IT Enterprise Architecture, lead by NASA's Deputy Chief Information Officer.

The keynote luncheon speaker was Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson, Director of the Hayden Planetarium at the Rose Center for Earth and Space in New York. He brought the house down with his intellect and wisdom, matched with pointed humor. One of the workshops also included four candidates from Donald Trump's second season of "The Apprentice Program." They performed a very enlightening and well-attended workshop entitled, "Lessons from the Board Room."

The event was coordinated by NASA OSDBU Chief of Staff Lamont Hames. Infonetics, a small minority business, located in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area, provided excellent logistical support to the conference. The OSDBU received the highest evaluative ratings from attendees to the conference.

## **MARSHALL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION, A NASA VETERAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS (VOSB), IS AWARDED PRIME CONTRACT BY DOD**

Marshall Communications Corporation (MARSHALL), a veteran owned small business, announced that the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) of the United States Department of Defense (DOD) has officially selected it as its systems integrator of choice. MARSHALL will lead the effort in providing a unique, first-of-its-kind Digital Video Broadcasting-Return Channel Satellite (DVB-RCS) system for USCENTCOM. The company will design, test, and fully integrate a complete turn-key DVB-RCS system that will be fielded to multiple installations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom.

As the prime contractor, MARSHALL will be working with several partners in satisfying the requirements in bringing the DVB-RCS technology into supporting the effort of disseminating communications for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) in Iraq.

"DVB-RCS technology will provide greater capability for two-way data transmissions that will improve communications for the UAVs on the forefront of the operations in Iraq.

"We have consistently provided a high quality of systems engineering and integration of satellite networking services to our customers. This award is just another approval of Marshall's capability of delivering value," said Sonny Marshall, president and chief executive officer. "DISA's selection of Marshall lends credibility to Marshall's ability to perform at the level of much larger companies, and we appreciate the opportunity to do so."

## **VETERAN OWNED BUSINESS RECEIVES NASA CONTRACT AWARD**

Congratulations to Commercial Siding and Maintenance Co. a small, veteran-owned business in Houston, Texas on its recent contract award with Kennedy Space Center for \$39.4 million.

## **LLANO WINS VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION AWARD**

On October 16, 2005 Mark Llano, a former Marine, received the 2005 Veteran Small Business Champion Award. His business, Source One Distributors Inc., opened in 2003, and supplies NASA, the military, and law-enforcement agencies with gear such as bulletproof vests, night-vision goggles and ballistic helmets





*Mark Llano*

Llano has been recognized for advancing small-business opportunities for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces., Source One Inc. employs 15 people, eight of them veterans. He received the award for both South Florida and the entire Southeast Region, which also covers the Carolinas, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Kentucky. "Obviously he's a veteran himself and he wants to give back, so he hires veterans," said Carole Hart, "A lot of his products go back to soldiers in the field. He knows what the needs are there, and he's filling those needs. We're very proud of him,"

A member of NASA's Minority Business Resource Advisory Committee, Llano helps other veterans navigate the maze of contract negotiations and paperwork necessary to become a government contractor and puts on seminars and speaks one-on-one to people just starting out or trying to increase their government presence, he said.

## **MARS LANDS AT SHOT**

A little bit of mars has landed at SHOT, Inc., and it's open for business. Developed with support from the NASA Institute for Advanced Concepts (NIAC), the SHOT Martian Environment Simulator faithfully recreates the atmosphere, temperature and light spectrum found on the red planet. Researchers from across the nation recently have begun conducting experiments inside the device's 5,673 cubic centimeter (346.2 cubic inch) pure quartz central chamber, which is a test bed for experimental ecopoiesis. Ecopoiesis is the starting-up of a planetary ecosystem based on Earth life. It also is a component of terraforming -- the creation of an Earth-like planetary environment.



“In a set of short term experiments ranging from one day to nearly two weeks in duration, quite a few microorganisms survived the harsh environment,” said David J. Thomas, PhD. His experiments were conducted with environmental conditions in the chamber set as it may be possible to make them in the future, rather than as they are believed to exist today. “If we can find a way to warm Mars by four degrees Celsius, we can start a runaway greenhouse effect that will melt the ice cap and any other water frozen on the planet’s surface. The condition limiting life on Mars is dryness,” said Thomas.

Founded in 1988 as the result of a successful science fair entry, SHOT is an engineering and product development company. Its 27 full-time engineers, scientists and technicians are professional inventors. It serves several government agencies, universities and a growing list of commercial customers. SHOT ([www.SHOT.com](http://www.SHOT.com)) has developed research payloads for seven space shuttle missions and three sub-orbital rocket flights.

## **GRADUATED 8(A) CONTRACTOR CONTINUES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NASA MISSION**

When Discovery astronauts Stephen Robinson and Soichi Noguchi walked in space to repair the spacecraft it held particular importance for BST Systems. This graduated 8(a) company continues to do important work for NASA by designing and manufacturing batteries that fit NASA’s unique needs. Eleven of their batteries were used in the ongoing space mission. Six of them helped to operate systems in the solid rocket boosters used to launch the Discovery. Critical to a successful launch, the batteries powered the space vehicle’s radar tracking system, as well as the range safety and flight electronics subsystems.

BST batteries were also used in the space suits used by astronauts Stephen Robinson and Soichi Noguchi during their “spacewalks” to make repairs on the shuttle Discovery. The batteries provide all power for the Astronaut’s life-support systems, ensuring oxygen supply and pressurization. The battery also provides the power needed for each suit’s thermal control and communications system.

This is not the first time the BST’s batteries were used. They have produced batteries for the aerospace industry for about 15 years, including work on every space shuttle launch for the last six years. BST batteries were also used in the Mars Pathfinder launched in December 1996. In addition the NASA and other aerospace contracts, they have produced batteries for submarines. BST was founded in 1983 by Max Solis, Thomas T. Terjesen and Joseph Benek. It currently has about 75 employees and was the recipient of NASA Minority contractor of the Year Award in 1994.

## **ELECTRONIC SUBCONTRACTOR REPORTING SYSTEM (ESRS) UP AND READY FOR USE**

The Electronic Subcontractor Reporting System (eSRS) reached initial operating capability (IOC) for most civilian agencies on October 28. ESRS is a significant development in the Bush administration’s e-government initiative because it gives agencies and large contractors a one-stop shop for proving they are meeting milestones for subcontracting with small, disadvantaged and women-owned businesses.

The eSRS activities at NASA are being led by Shirley Perez in the OSDBU. Shirley is serving as Agency Coordinator. Each Center Small Business Specialist has been designated Point of Contact (POC) for their center. All contracting personnel will have access to eSRS. OSDBU and Procurement managers will also be able to view and pull reports.

NASA was just one of a few civilian agencies that had an electronic system. Selected information from our electronic system will be transmitted to the Government-wide eSRS. NASA’s electronic system will remain operational for legacy purposes, and reviewing and retrieving reports.

## **BOEING/MAINTHIA MENTOR PROTÉGÉ SIGNING CEREMONY**



Mainthia Technologies Inc., a small minority owned business, recently won a "mentoring" contract with the Boeing Co leading to the purchase of computer parts, dials, gauges and other hardware for the space station. Mr. Lamont Hames of the NASA OSDBU appeared at the Boeing Company's Boeing/Mainthia Mentor Protégé Signing Ceremony. According to Boeing, Mr. Hame's insightful guidance and consultation during the discovery and developmental stages of the historical initiative enhanced the agreement.

## **HUNDREDS TURN OUT FOR STENNIS INDUSTRY DAY**



Aug. 17, 2005, Bay St. Louis, hundreds of small businesses at the business exposition, looking for a chance to find new customers, showed up for a business exposition hosted at Stennis Space Center. The event was designed so that participants could maximize opportunities for networking with local Government and industry representatives and determine business opportunities both now and in the future as the Center continues to grow. Henry Molnar, NASA small business specialist for Stennis Space Center, said it was the second time for the expo. The previous event, two years prior, attracted about 200 participants. This year it attracted more than 500, over doubling the number of participants! There were 48 booths representing about 40 vendors, including government agencies, educational institutions and a range of companies.

## UPCOMING EVENTS THAT NASA WILL EITHER HOST OR SIGNIFICANTLY PARTICIPATE IN

**January 10, 2006:** "How Small and Minority Businesses Can Procure with the Government Conference," sponsored by the Partnership's Small Business Development Council and the Minority Business Development Council, **Buffalo, New York.** (Ralph Thomas – Speaker); Contact: Tracey Houston <thouston@thepartnership.org>

**February 2-4, 2006:** "Third Annual **Minority Serving Institutions Research Partnerships Conference**," in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Department of the Interior, and the Department of Commerce, University of Texas, Pan American, Edinburg, Texas; Website: <http://citec.panam1.edu/msirc>

**March 6-8, 2006:** "18th Annual **NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) High-Tech Small Business Conference**," sponsored by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Westin Los Angeles Airport Hotel, Los Angeles, California; Website: <http://acquisition.jpl.nasa.gov/boo> Point of Contact: Jasmine Colbert 818.354.8689 Email: [jasmine.n.colbert@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:jasmine.n.colbert@jpl.nasa.gov)

**April 6, 2006:** "17th National Training Conference & Small Business Expo, sponsored by the **National Association of Professional Asian American Women (NAPAW)**, (**Ralph Thomas – Workshop Speaker on "Teaming Agreements"**) Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, North Bethesda, Maryland; Website: [www.napaw.org](http://www.napaw.org)

**April 20, 2006:** "Federal OSDBU Directors Procurement Conference," sponsored by the Federal Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization; Showplace Arena, Upper Marlboro, Maryland; Website: [www.osdbu.gov](http://www.osdbu.gov)